

SBA Selects Ron Williams of Fayetteville As 2006 Minority Small Business of Year



Terri Denison Presented the annual SBA Award To Ron Williams at the MED Week Luncheon

Ron Williams, President and CEO of Unified Consultants Group Inc., of Fayetteville, Georgia, was selected the 2006 Georgia Minority Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Georgia District Office.

Williams received the SBA annual award on August 14 at the annual Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Awards Luncheon in Atlanta. MED Week is sponsored by the SBA and the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA).

The luncheon was part of the 24th annual observance of MED Week in the United States. MED Week recognizes the tremendous contributions minority

entrepreneurs make to the economic well being of the United States.

SBA Georgia District Director Terri Denison presented the 2006 award to Williams at the MED Week luncheon hosted by the Atlanta Business League.

"Ron Williams is an excellent example of someone who has pursued the American Dream through entrepreneurship," said Ms. Denison. "Unified Consultants demonstrates what happens when expertise, strategy, resources and commitment come together."

Williams, who retired as an Army Major after 20 years of military service, joined some colleagues in 1999 to form a new company. The venture went no where for a couple of years until he and Johnny Asbury, another military veteran, decided to acquire the firm and try to put new life into what had become a listless small business.

"We took the business over, restructured it and began to run with it," recalls Williams of his first commercial venture as a civilian. During this run, Williams has served as President & CEO of Unified Consultants Group Inc., while Asbury, a retired Army Lt. Colonel, is Vice President of the business based in Fayetteville, Georgia.

At first, Williams says his company, with basically no track record, started knocking on the doors of federal contractor. But his efforts generated little results as the company tried to get work

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SBA News Items

Allan Adams Named SBDC Director

Allan Adams has been named State Director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Georgia. Since April 2005, Adams has served as interim director of the SBDC, a UGA public service unit and resource partner of the SBA. Prior to joining the SBDC, Adams was Associate Director for Information Technology Outreach Services, part of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Adams is currently a doctoral student at UGA's Institute of Higher Education. He has a master's of business administration degree from Brenau University and a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Georgia.

Atlanta Library Holding SBA Workshops

Workshops on SBA programs and other services for business start-ups are being held at various locations of the Atlanta/Fulton County library system through late September.

Workshops on "Business Basics for Entrepreneurs," are being held at seven library branches through Sept. 13th. Other workshops on writing an effective Business Plan were being held at five branches. For dates and locations, go to the Atlanta Library web site at www.afplweb.com.



Matchmaker held for Women-owned Companies

The District held its first Business "Matchmaker" event for women-owned businesses this summer, an event that attracted over 75 participants. The event put owners face-to-face with contractors from a number of businesses and agencies including BellSouth, Delta Air Lines, Emory University, Fort McPherson, HUD, the City of Atlanta and the Georgia Tech Procurement Assistance Center. For more information, contact SBA Economic Development Specialist Charlotte Johnson at 404/331-0100, ext. 405.

Small Business: Prepare Before Disaster Strikes

By Region IV Administrator Nuby Fowler



The very best time to respond to a disaster is before it happens. For small business owners in particular, a relatively small investment of time and money now can help minimize damage to property, reduce losses, and protect valuable assets in the event disaster strikes. The great lesson of 2005 is that disasters are unpredictable and that we should never underestimate the force of nature. In that regard, Hurricane Katrina has been a wake-up call for the entire country; teaching us that planning and preparation are key elements to both good business management and the protection of our families.

Recent media reports from across the country have heightened our awareness of the fact that no region and no state are exempt from disasters, whether natural or man made. Hurricanes, tornados, flooding, fire, ice storms, oil spills and terrorist attacks occur indiscriminately. But with proper planning, you can increase the likelihood of business survival, minimize your down time, and reduce the long term impact on your bottom line.

Among the top priorities for businesses and individuals alike is protecting critical records. Take time to make hard copy back-ups and store them in a secure location offsite. If possible make password protected electronic copies on a disc or jump drive and mail them to an out-of-state friend or relative. These simple steps could save considerable time and money if your home or place of business is severely damaged. It is a good idea to meet with your insurance agent to make sure you understand what is covered and equally important what is not covered if disaster strikes. Consider buying business interruption insurance, which covers lost profits and necessary expenses while your business is out of operation.

Be proactive; periodically conduct a risk assessment of your business, including the facility where it is located. Identify particular risks based on your geographic area. If you are in a region prone to hurricanes for example, take steps to protect your property such as installing storm shutters. You may be wise to develop contingency plans based on likely disaster scenarios. Just thinking through the process will serve you well in the event you need to activate emergency plans.

Above all, employ common sense measures that include strategies for communicating with employees, suppliers, customers, the local media and the general public. Just keep in mind that disasters really can strike anywhere and that your efforts today will make a big difference if the unexpected strikes your community. For additional information on disaster preparation, go to www.ready.gov.

Matriarch Construction Uses SBA Bond Program

The SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program can mean the difference in a small contractor winning a contract or even getting to bid on a project that requires bonding.

In addition to federal requirements for bid and performance bonds, many state, county and private-sector contracts also require bonding. But new and small businesses may not be able to obtain bonds conventionally through commercial bonding firms.

Everton Archer is President and co-owner of Matriarch Construction Company in Tyrone, Georgia. He and Albert Mathis, company Vice President used the SBA's Surety Bonds Program recently to obtain both bid and performance bonds on two contracts valued at about \$1.5 million.

Bid Bonds in Georgia:

		Contract \$\$
FY 2005	112	\$40.7 million
FY 2006 YTD	96	\$43.3 million
YTD: 6/30/06		

"The SBA's Surety Bond Program has worked out very well for us," says Archer who has a Master's Degree in Building Construction from the University of Florida. "I would recommend it to other small contractors."

Archer and his company were able to get their SBA guaranteed bonds through National Surety Services Inc., a bonding company in Atlanta.

The SBA can guarantee bonds issued by surety companies, such as Natural Surety Services, against a percentage of losses sustained if a contractor defaults on a project.

In the case of Matriarch Construction, its SBA-backed performance

bonds cover its work on the renovation of a National Guard Building at Ft. Gillem, Georgia and the construction of a community park for the City of Alpharetta. Both of these projects required performance and payment bonds, according to Archer who lives in Sharpsburg, Georgia.

The SBA can guarantee bid, payment and performance bonds for contracts up to \$2 million for eligible small contractors.

Businesses in the construction and service industries can qualify for the SBA program if their average annual receipts for the last three years do not exceed \$6 million.

For additional information on the SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program, go to www.sba.gov/osg.

Matriarch Construction, established in 1994, is a general contractor with a concentration in utility installation.

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at various federal installations including nearby Ft. McPherson. However, this started to change when Williams' firm was certified in the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program in February 2002. The company, now with 47 employees, is servicing three contracts obtained under 8(a) including a \$4.9 million contract at Ft. McPherson for anti-terrorism analysis and other technical support to the Third Army Central Command.

Unified Consultants Group provides logistics and management support as well as other services related to antiterrorism/force protection to various government agencies. Under another 8(a) contract, the company is providing annual property security surveys to the Social Security Administration for between 100 and 150 of its offices. The company has another contract at Ft. McPherson to cover supply functions at the base, including transportation.

In 2003, the company had revenues of about \$148,000. In 2004, revenues grew to \$2.04 million with net profits of \$313,388. Last year, revenues went to \$3.9 million while profits reached \$855,000.

SCORE Appoints New Officers For Local and National Positions

Wanda Braziel has been named the new SCORE District Director for Georgia succeeding Fred Abood of Atlanta. Ms. Braziel's appointment is effective on Oct. 1, 2006.

Braziel spent 18 years with Datacard Corporation where she was a Systems Engineer and later Director of Product Marketing.



Ms. Braziel

Braziel has volunteered with the Atlanta SCORE Chapter for four years. She served as Vice Chair of Seminars and has been on the Executive Committee.

In related developments, Steve Bloom will become Chairman of the Atlanta SCORE Chapter in October, succeeding Tom Clark in that position. Bloom has been with the Atlanta Chapter for 10 years and is currently in real estate development.

In addition, Fred Abood is joining the National SCORE Advisory Council. He is a former Senior Vice President with the Marriott Corporation.

SBA Holds Teen Workshop For Marietta High Students

The District Office annual Teen Entrepreneurial Workshop featured a Business Plan contest for 20 female students from Marietta High School. The participants were in grades 9-12 and took part in an after school program run by the Wise Women Speak Foundation Inc. Paula Washington, founder of the foundation, hosted the students at the teen workshop.

The winner of the Business Plan contest was a group of students whose business is "Marietta Style," a retailer and designer of custom jewelry. The trophy award was donated by the Cobb Chamber of Commerce. The student teams prepared their business plans prior to the workshop and then made oral presentations before the judges.

Another highlight of the workshop was a tour for the students at the Chick-fil-A national headquarters off Buffington Road in Atlanta. While there, the students met with S. Truett Cathy, CEO and founder of national the restaurant chain.

Guest speakers at the workshop included Scott Shickler, CEO of Global Education Technologies Inc., who spoke on planning for success. Doug Hood, President



These students from Marietta High School presented their Business Plan to the judges

of Rainmaker Capital Corp, was the keynote speaker.

Judges for the Business Plan competition were Rose Marie Drake, Regional Account Manager for CIT Small Business Lending; Soyini Coke, Principal with Annona Enterprises LLC; and Jerry Gilbert, a member of the Atlanta SCORE Chapter 48.

The event is coordinated by Patrice Marie Dozier, an SBA Program Support Assistant.



Terri Denison, center, SBA Georgia District Director, joined two participants of the Focus Group in Gainesville. From left, Norma Hernandez who has an accounting & business services firm, and Johnnie Mejia, Branch Manager of Gainesville Bank & Trust .

SBA Georgia District Office Holds Four Hispanic Focus Group Meetings

The Georgia District Office recently completed a series of Hispanic focus group meetings in Georgia. The four meetings of local civic and business leaders served as a forum to finalize a Strategic Outreach Plan for improving programs and services to the Latino business community.

The focus groups, which follow a number of meetings by a selected Hispanic Outreach Task Force, met at several locations in metro Atlanta as well as in Gainesville and Dalton, Georgia.

"Feedback and ideas from these focus groups will be incorporated into a final Strategic Outreach Action Plan that the SBA District Office will be charged with implementing," said Terri Denison, Georgia District Director.

In April 2005, the Georgia District convened its task force to work on outreach strategies for Hispanic-owned businesses as part of a continuing effort to expand the use and awareness of SBA programs.

The group was charged with reviewing and analyzing past outreach efforts as well as to develop new or revised strategies for the Hispanic business community. The Hispanic task force is similar to one that convened in 2003-2004 to look at the SBA's outreach to the African-American community in the state.